

# Zera Shimshon

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## Chapter XXII: Vayakhel (Ex. 35:1–38:20)

### Essay 5. The punishment of the missing *yod*

**פסוק** "והנשאים הביאו". אמר ר' נתן: מה ראו נשיאים להתנדב בחנופת המזבח תחלה ולא עשו כן בנדבת המשכן? אלא אמרו, ויתנדבו צבור מה שיתנדבו ומה שיקסר אנו משלימין אותו, כיון שהשלימו צבור הכלל, "הביאו את אבני השתם" וכו'. ולפי שנתעצלו מתחלה נעדרה אות משמם, "והנשאים" קתיב ע"כ. יש לדקדק טעמא מאי נענשו בעונש זה, ומה מדה כנגד מדה איכא.

There is a verse: **“And the chieftains brought onyx and other stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece”** (Ex. 35:27). Rashi explained:

**R. Nathan said, “What did the princes see to be the first to contribute to dedication of the altar (Num. 7:12 ff.), but they didn’t do this for the contribution to the Tabernacle [where they were the last to contribute]? They said: ‘Let the community contribute what they will contribute, and what will then be lacking we will supply.’ When the community gave everything needed in its entirety — as it is said, ‘For the stuff they had was enough [for all the work to make it, and some was left]’ (Ex. 36:7), the princes asked, ‘What can we now do?’ Therefore, they ‘brought onyx and other stones.’ Because they were careless at the beginning, a letter is absent from their names, i.e., their titles, as ‘the princes’ is written deficiently, with a *yod* missing, i.e., והנשאים instead of והנשיאים.”**

- Rashi to Ex. 35:27

**We should check the reason why they were punished with this punishment, and how it is a measure-for-measure punishment.<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Mishnah Sota 1:7; Sota 8b; Megillah 12b; Sanhedrin 100a. The Talmud’s wording, במדה שאדם מודד בה מודדים לו, is equivalent to the well-known saying of מדה כנגד מדה (*middah k'neged middah*) (*measure against measure*),” that G-d punishes a person measure-for-measure.

וַיָּדוּעַ מֵהַ שְׁפָתַי הַרְבֵּי זְכוּרֹנוֹ לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא שֶׁבְּנִתְיַנַּת הַצְּדָקָה יֵשׁ לוֹ לְאָדָם לְכוּיֵן "וְהִנֵּה מַעֲשֵׂה הַצְּדָקָה שְׁלוֹם", וְהַפְּרוּטָה שֶׁהוּא נוֹתֵן לְעַנֵּי הוּא רִמְזוֹ לַיּוֹ"ד שֶׁבְּשֵׁם וְכוּ'. וְכֵאֵן שֶׁהֵם לֹא הִבִּיאוּ צְדָקָתָם וְנִדְבָתָם לֵה' נִעְדְּרָה אוֹת יוֹ"ד מִשְׁמֵם. וְעוֹד בְּדֶרֶךְ אַחֲרַת אֲמָרוֹ בְּזוֹהַר כִּי הַמְּשַׁכֵּן הוּא רִמְזוֹ לְעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְלְעוֹלָם הַבָּא. וְהֵם שֶׁלֹּא הִבִּיאוּ נִדְבָתָם תְּחִלָּה לְמִלְאֲכַת הַמְּשַׁכֵּן חֲטָאוּ בְּיוֹ"ד וְהַ"א, וְקִיָּמָא לֵן כְּדִי רִשְׁעָה אַחַת אֲתָה מְסַיְיבו וְאִי אֲתָה מְסַיְיבו מִשּׁוּם שְׁתֵּי רִשְׁעִיּוֹת, וְעַל כֵּן נִידוּנוּ בְּחֻמּוֹרָה שֶׁנִּעְדְּרָה יוֹ"ד שֶׁהוּא רִמְזוֹ לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא שֶׁהִיא הַחֻמּוֹרָה.

**It is known what the rabbi Isaac Luria, the Ari,<sup>2</sup> may he be remembered for life in the World-to-Come, wrote,<sup>3</sup> that in the giving of charity, a man should direct his thoughts, “For the work of charity shall be peace,”<sup>4</sup> and the *peruta* that he is giving to a poor person is a hint to the *yod* that is in the Name of G-d.<sup>5</sup> Here, where they didn’t bring their charity and their donations to G-d, the letter *yod* was missing from their names.**

**Further, in another way, they said in the Zohar that the Tabernacle was a hint of this world and the World-to-Come.<sup>6</sup> They who did not bring their donations first for the work of the Tabernacle sinned with the *yod* and the *heh*,<sup>7</sup> and we hold that [one who performs one action] is liable for one iniquity, but you do not hold him liable for two iniquities, i.e., he is only punished for violating one prohibition.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, they are judged with the more stringent one,<sup>9</sup> which was the absent *yod*, which was a hint of the World-to-Come, which is more stringent.**

אִי נָמִי שְׁפָל יִשְׂרָאֵל הִבִּיאוּ מְמוּנָם דְּהֵיִינוּ מְמוֹן הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה לְעֲשׂוֹת הַמְּשַׁכֵּן שֶׁהוּא סִימָן לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא, אֲמָנָם הַנְּשִׂיָאִים הִבִּיאוּ אֶת אַבְנֵי הַשֹּׁהַם שֶׁבָּאוּ לָהֶם דְּרָךְ גַּס, וְהֵיִינוּ כְּמוֹ מְמוֹן שֶׁל עוֹלָם הַבָּא. וְכִדִּי שֶׁלֹּא תֵאֵמַר שֶׁנִּדְבָתָם גְּדוּלָה מִנְּדַבַּת יִשְׂרָאֵל, מִשּׁוּם הַכִּי נִעְדְּרָה יוֹ"ד מִשְׁמֵם לֹאֲמַר שֶׁאֵין לָהֶם כָּל כֶּד זְכוּת עַל זֶה, שֶׁהֲרִי לֹא הִבִּיאוּ כְּלוּם מִמְּמוּנָם, וְהֵיִינוּ"ד הוּא רִמְזוֹ לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא שֶׁנִּבְרָא בְּיוֹ"ד.

**Alternatively, all Israel brought their money, which was the money of this world, to make the Tabernacle, which is a sign of the World-to-Come. Indeed, the princes brought their onyx stones, that came to them by way of miracle, falling every morning with the *manna*,<sup>10</sup> and this was like money of the World-to-Come. In order that you won’t say that their**

<sup>2</sup> Lit., “the cubs of the Lion.”

<sup>3</sup> His teachings were actually recorded by his disciple, Rabbi Chaim Vital. Some editions attribute authorship directly to the Ari z”l, while others cite Rabbi Vital.

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 32:17.

<sup>5</sup> Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Nof Etz Chaim* (Frankfurt 1684), Gate 3: Sha’ar Ma’amrei Chazal (on Avot, chapter 2). *See also* Pirkei Avot, 2:7, “The more charity, the more peace.”

<sup>6</sup> Zohar II:220b.

<sup>7</sup> Isaiah 26:4 is traditionally interpreted as, “For in Yah, the L-rd, you have an everlasting Rock,” but in Menachot 29b, it is translated as, “For in Yah, the L-rd, you have a creator of worlds,” two worlds, this world and the World-to-Come, with the two letters of Yah, the *yod* and *heh*, standing for the two worlds.

<sup>8</sup> Jerusalem Talmud Terumot 7:1; Jerusalem Talmud Ketubot 3:1; Ketubot 32b, 37a; Bava Kamma 83b; Makkot 4b, 13b.

<sup>9</sup> Yevamot 32a; Sanhedrin 37b, 50b, 81a; Keritot 14b.

<sup>10</sup> Yoma 75a.

donation was greater than the donation of Israel, for this reason, the *yod* is missing from their names, to say that they don't have any great merit from this. For they didn't bring anything from their own money, but only the jewels that fell from Heaven with the *manna*, and the *yod* is a hint of the World-to-Come, which was made from the *yod*.<sup>11</sup>

ועוד בא שלישיה במה שמצינו באותיות רבי עקיבא, אין יו"ד אלא יד ואין יד אלא מנה שנאמר "ותרב משאת בנימן ממשאת כלם חמש ידות". ולפי שהם לא הביאו מנה לנדבת המשכן נעדרה יו"ד, דאין יו"ד אלא יד.

Also, a third reason came through what we find in the midrash Alphabet of Rabbi Akiva, that a *yod* [יו"ד] is nothing other than a *yad* [יד] ["hand"], and a *yad* is nothing other than a portion, as it is said, "Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times [*yadot*] [ידות] as much as any of theirs."<sup>12</sup> Because they didn't bring a portion as a donation to the Tabernacle, the *yod* was missing from their names, for a *yod* is nothing other than a *yad* [יד] ["hand"], i.e., a portion.

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<sup>11</sup> Menachot 29b.

<sup>12</sup> Gen. 43:34.